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ABSTRACT

This fact sheet bulletin describes the Urban Day School (UDS) in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The school contains grades pre-kindergarten through 8, and its student body is drawn from lower income caucasian, Negro and Puerto Rican families. The UDS is a private school, without church affiliation, although it is staffed in part by Dominican Sisters. It has an accredited Montessori preschool, ungraded primary classes in grades 1 to 4, and departmental classes in grades 5 to 8. The school offers speech therapy, remedial reading, mathematics, psychological counseling, and a cultural enrichment program. Particular stress is placed on parent involvement, and no child is admitted unless his parents "pledge" to become involved in his education. Pupil achievement data and budget figures are also included. (KG)

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Center for Urban Education | Program Conspectus

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Program: The Urban Day School

Location: Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Date Started: September 1967

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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Scope: The school contains grades pre-k through 8. Its student population of 206 is 22% white and Puerto Rican, 78% Negro. 60% of the children are from low-income families.

Staff: 2 administrators; 10 teachers; 1 master teacher; 1 librarian; 10 parent aides; 20 volunteers, including 1 part time specialist each in psychology, reading, social work, creative dancing, physical education, and speech therapy; 2 community organizers.

Special Materials, Equipment, & Facilities: The school is temporarily housed in a former parochial school building which is scheduled for demolition. A search for new quarters in the same area is underway.

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Description of Activities:

The UDS is a private school, without church affiliation, although staffed in part by Dominican Sisters.

It has an accredited Montessori preschool for children 2 years 8 months through 6 years of age; ungraded primary classes in grades 1-4; and departmentalized classes in grades 5-8. Class size is limited to 20 children, and almost every class is staffed by at least 1 adult in addition to the teacher.

The school offers special services, including speech therapy, remedial reading and mathematics, and psychological counselling. A large number of extracurricular and "enrichment" activities are also made available to the children.

Particular stress is placed on parent involvement, and no child is admitted unless his parents "pledge" to become involved in his education. The Community Organizers, a parent advisory committee, and the Family Involvement component all serve to strengthen parent participation.

Although it is located in the heart of the inner city, the UDS has become a "magnet school" with a list of white students waiting to be enrolled.

Evaluation:

No formal assessment of the UDS has yet been undertaken. However, the school has been highly rated by 2 PRS consultants: Dr. William Engbretson, past president of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education; and Dr. Vernon Haubrich, Institute for Research on Poverty, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin. The school has been nominated for a Lane Bryant Award for outstanding Community Service.

In a letter to PRS, Sister Virgine Lawinger, the administrator of the school, offers the following pupil achievement data:

> The greatest concentration is being placed in the lower school (ages 6-10) on basic reading skills.
>
> Of these 80 students, taking standard basic tests that accompany the Scott, Foresman Series, percentages were as follows:

12%	ranked Very High	8%	ranked Average
8%	High	25%	Low Average
42%	High Average	4%	Very Low

These same students ranked as follows on the Stanford Reading Tests:

Grade Level		Grade Level	
1.6-2.0	6%	3.6-4.0	8%
2.1-2.5	2%	4.1-4.5	6%
2.6-3.0	34%	4.6-5.0	6%
3.1-3.5	25%	5.0+	12%

While noting gains in achievement, Sister Virgine also states:

> even more important are positive changes that are taking place in self-concepts. Most of our children do like themselves and think their school is great. And for our families, the school and what it stands for brings renewed hope. More and more the school is becoming the center of activity...

Budget:

$561 per pupil. The $156,000 projected budget for 1969-70 is being raised through donations from industry, and private sources. Yearly tuition of $15 is "essentially a book fee." In March 1968 the school received $24,244.37 for its Family Involvement component from the Wisconsin Emergency Fund for Inner City Milwaukee. This fund presently provides $2,800-$3,200 a month to underwrite the cost of the school's parent aides. ESEA Title I funds provide for remedial reading instruction and some extra-curricular activities.

The contributed services of the 20 volunteers and six teaching Sisters account in part for the low per pupil expenditure.

References:

A fact sheet, back issues of the UDS newsletter, and copies of articles from the local press can be supplied by the school.

Contact:

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Descriptors:

COMMUNITY SCHOOLS
DEPARTMENTAL TEACHING PLANS
*MAGNET SCHOOLS
*MONTESSORI METHOD
PARENT PARTICIPATION
PRIVATE SCHOOLS
UNGRADED CLASSES

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